

Lake County News Sun, June 10, 2008

A literacy initiative designed for Latino parents and their young children through the College of Lake County will continue after Congressman Mark Kirk, R-Highland Park, announced a \$335,043 grant from the U.S. Department of Education on Monday.

The program "Families Involved in Reading Stories Together" began in 2005, but was scaled back earlier this year when the initial federal grant money ran out and local funding was used to keep the program going.

"The need for this program is very high and we are thrilled to be able to resume it to its original scope and even expand it," said Mary Charuhas, CLC's dean of adult education.

The FIRST program offers parents instruction in English as a Second Language and parenting skills, while their children age 6 or younger do activities promoting reading and learning.

The program began in 2005, building on previous programs offered at the Round Lake Area Library and Adult Learning and Technology Center in Waukegan. During the first 18 months, 397 parents and children were served.

Services funded by the new grant will be offered in partnership with the Waukegan Public Library, Round Lake Area Library, Zion-Benton Public Library and Literacy Volunteers of Lake County.

"Parents are their children's first and most influential teachers, so it's very important that they can read with their children in English," Charuhas said.

Classes are held two hours a day, three days a week for 16 weeks and will begin in August.

For more information or to register for a class, call (847) 543-2021.